

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for distributing and displaying advertising in theatres, comprising:

an advertising server having a database of advertisements;  
a plurality of geographically distributed displays, associated with a corresponding plurality of theatres and coupled via a network to said advertising server; and

a distribution controller, associated with said advertising server, that causes selected ones of said advertisements to be communicated from said advertising server via said network and displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays.

2. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of displays include video projectors adapted to display advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

3. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of displays include video monitors adapted to display advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

4. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

3 static,  
4 picture-in-picture,  
5 audio,  
6 animation,  
7 multi-segment, and  
8 full-motion video clips.

5. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality  
2 of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local  
3 storage unit that locally stores said selected ones of said  
4 advertisements.

6. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said  
2 distribution controller comprises a reporting module that maintains  
3 a distribution history for said selected ones of said  
4 advertisements.

7. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said  
2 distribution controller comprises a copy module that allows remote  
3 advertisers to provide new advertisements to said database.

8. A method of distributing and displaying advertising in theatres, comprising:

storing a plurality of advertisements in a database of advertisements associated with an advertising server;

coupling a plurality of geographically distributed displays, associated with a corresponding plurality of theatres, to said advertising server via a network; and

causing selected ones of said advertisements to be communicated from said advertising server via said network and displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays.

9. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of displays include video projectors adapted to display advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

10. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of displays include video monitors adapted to display advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

11. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

static,

picture-in-picture,

5 audio,  
6 animation,  
7 multi-segment, and  
8 full-motion video clips.

12. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality  
2 of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local  
3 storage unit, said method further comprising locally storing said  
4 selected ones of said advertisements.

13. The method as recited in Claim 8 further comprising  
maintaining a distribution history for said selected ones of said  
advertisements.

14. The method as recited in Claim 8 further comprising  
allowing remote advertisers to provide new advertisements to said  
database.

15. A system for distributing and displaying advertising in theatres, comprising:

a computer network;

an advertising server having a database of advertisements and coupled to said computer network;

a plurality of geographically distributed displays, associated with a corresponding plurality of theatres and coupled to said computer network; and

an advertising controller, coupled to said computer network,

that:

allows advertisers to provide advertisements to said database,

allows said advertisers to specify distribution of said advertisements among said theatres,

causes selected ones of said advertisements to be communicated from said advertising server via said network and displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays, and

maintains a distribution history for said selected ones of said advertisements to allow said advertisers to be charged for said distribution.

16. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality  
of displays include video projectors adapted to display  
advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

17. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality  
of displays include video monitors adapted to display  
advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

18. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said  
advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

static,  
picture-in-picture,  
audio,  
animation,  
multi-segment, and  
full-motion video clips.

19. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality  
of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local  
storage unit that locally stores said selected ones of said  
advertisements.

20. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said  
advertising controller causes said selected ones of said  
advertisements to be communicated from said advertising server  
based on:

time of day,

day of week,

season,

movie screen sizes in said theatres, and

ratings of motion pictures playing in said theatres.